

The
**THOREAU
SOCIETY
BULLETIN**

BULLETIN FIFTY-THREE

FALL, 1955

THOREAU SOCIETY BOOKLET 10 . . .

We are happy to be able to include with this bulletin a reprint (slightly reduced) of the "Thoreau Annex" of the CONCORD FREEMAN, which was issued sometime in 1880. The annex contains much of value on Thoreau that has not been reprinted elsewhere, yet copies of the original are virtually unobtainable. We are deeply indebted to Mr. Frederick Bloomhardt, Librarian of the Concord Free Public Library, for obtaining for us a photostat of the original in the library's files.

Members may recall that in Bulletin 23 we printed a facsimile of the original drawing of the hut (now owned by Mr. Albert E. Lownes) that is reproduced somewhat retouched on the first page of the annex.

The cost of printing this booklet was covered by the life memberships of Mr. Howard Zahniser of Hyattsville, Md., and of Prof. Richard Elliott of St. Paul, Minn. The cost of printing this bulletin was covered by the life membership of Mrs. Henry Chamberlain of Wayland, Mass. Life membership is twenty-five dollars.

EDMUND SEWALL'S CONCORD DIARY

By Clayton Hoagland

On a lucky day in February, 1952, one of my neighbors and friends in Rutherford, N.J. introduced me to the man who owns a diary and several letters written by Ellen Sewall's brother during a period when he lived in the Thoreau household.

Edmund Sewall's grandmother and aunt lived for years with the Thoreau family. In June, 1839, when Edmund was eleven years old, his mother brought him to Concord for a week's visit. Henry and John Thoreau took Edmund and several other boys boating on the river, and for an afternoon at Walden Pond. The following Spring Edmund returned to Concord and became a pupil in the school then conducted by the Thoreau brothers.

The original diary Edmund kept during his 1839 visit as well as an accurate copy of the journal he wrote during his Spring term as pupil in the school, and several letters that he wrote home from Concord in 1840 were preserved by the Sewall family. They finally came into possession of Edmund's grandson, Theodore S. Abbot. It was through his wife's sister, Mrs. Gerald M. Tamblin, that I met Mr. Abbot. Mrs. Tamblin knew of my interest in Thoreau, and she mentioned the Sewall material. I expressed my eagerness to see it.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Abbot I was fortunate enough to be able to borrow Edmund's original diary of 1839, and three original letters written from Concord in 1840. The most interesting item, however, was a thick school copy book into which a member of the Sewall family years ago had made a careful copy of several of Edmund's letters written in boyhood, and also of various diaries he kept from 1837 to the early 1840s.

This material made up a relatively small batch of papers, but the quality made up for the lack of bulk. The 1839 diary was in a notebook of 32 pages. There were three original letters written in Concord during Edmund's months as a pupil of Henry and John Thoreau. Much of the material in the copy book of 180 pages was an exact copy of these letters and of the 1839 and 1840 diaries, but much of it had little or no reference to Concord or to the Thoreaus. It did include an interesting biography of Edmund in the handwriting of Sarah F. Marble, who began the copy book about 1886. She did an important service in thus preserving the words of Edmund, for part of his journal in its original form has apparently passed out of family possession.

With Mr. Abbot's generous cooperation I drew freely upon letters and diaries and prepared an article of some 7000 words. This is now scheduled to appear in the New England Quarterly.

Though Henry S. Canby made brief quotations from some Sewall material about the Wards--it was Edmund's aunt Prudence Ward who was so long a boarder in the Thoreau home--yet to my knowledge no extensive part of these Sewall letters from Concord or the diary has ever been published. Annie Russell Marble had access to Edmund's diary, and made quotations.

I have had photostat copies made of two of Edmund Sewall's original letters from Concord, in his autograph. Because the script of the original diary of 1839 describing the boy's visit of a week was too faded to be clearly photographed, I made a complete, precise typescript of the diary, including all passages concerning the Thoreaus. This typed and photostatic material will go into the archives of the Society. A reprint of my published article will be added to it. Its principal contribution is the intimate view it gives of the Thoreau school, and of the household in Concord as it was in 1839 and 1840. We can be grateful to Edmund Sewall for recording so well his boy's eye view.

THOREAU MANUSCRIPTS AT HARVARD by Alexander Kern.

(In Bulletin 43, Francis Dedmond presented a catalog of Thoreau manuscripts at Harvard University Library. But "MS Am 278.5" was described simply as "Thoreau Manuscript fragments." We are happy now to be able to present this more detailed analysis of its contents.)

- Folder 1. Miscellaneous fragments & first drafts mainly on letters to Thoreau.
- Folder 2. Assorted fragments.
- Folder 3. Pages from Sophia's Journal of 1840.
- Folder 4. Fragments of Henry's Journal of 1842-3.
- Folder 5. Introduction to a Lecture (Cf. Jr. Jr. VI, 486-7).
- Folder 6. Journal frags. Cf. Jr., I, II, III.
- Folder 7. Jr. indices of natural phenomena.
- Folder 8. Notes for The Maine Woods or A Yankee in Canada.
- Folder 9. "Wild Apples." Ms. incomplete.
- Folder 10. "A Walk to Wachusett," earlier version, incomplete.
- Folder 11. Herald of Freedom scrap on Rogers. Cf. Works, IV, 306 ff.
- Folder 12. "A Yankee in Canad." 3 sheets
- Folder 12a. "The Transmigrations of the Seven Brahmins."
- Folder 13. "Autumnal Tints."
- Folder 14. Drafts & scraps for "Civil Disobed."
- Folder 15. Journals torn up for "A Week."
- Folder 16. Jr. sheets used in "Walden."
- Folder 17. Part of "The Maine Woods."
- Folder 18. Two Mss. marked "Life without Principle."
- Folder 19. "Sir Walter Raleigh." 1 sheet.
- Folder 20. "Life without Principle," a draft.
- Folder 21. "Walking." complete Ms. & scraps.

Young Thoreau Asserts Himself
John C. Broderick
University of Texas

In "Civil Disobedience," before reciting his troubles with the State over the payment of poll taxes, Henry David Thoreau recalls an earlier encounter over the payment of the ministerial tax "toward the support of a clergyman whose preaching my father attended, but never I myself."¹ At the request of the town officers Thoreau prepared "some such statement as this in writing:--'Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined.' This I gave to the town clerk; and he has it."² Though it is doubtful that this document is still extant, its date can be fixed with some exactness by reference to a file of manuscript tax account books in the Concord Town House.³ Thoreau's name appears first in the tax book for 1839 when he is charged the town and county poll tax of one dollar and fifty cents. The next year, 1840, he is charged both the town and county poll tax and the ministerial tax of one dollar. For 1841 he is charged only the town and county poll tax and is not thereafter charged the ministerial tax (or parish tax, as it was called after the late 1840's). His refusal to pay a tax to support a clergyman whose preaching he never attended must have occurred, therefore, in 1840, and not in 1838 as stated by Henry S. Canby.⁴

The same file of tax account books reveals another of Thoreau's youthful assertions of independence. The 1839 tax book lists his name as David H. Thoreau. An assessor's manuscript valuation book for 1840 lists David H. Thoreau also, but part of the name has been marked through and "Henry D." is written instead. The 1840 tax book and all thereafter list the familiar "Henry D. Thoreau." Thus, though Lyceum records and many Concord residents persist in referring to Thoreau as David Henry until the end of his life and afterwards, the tax assessors of Concord were informed early that it was with a self-assertive individual that they dealt, Henry D. Thoreau.

Footnotes

1. Writings, Walden ed. (Boston and New York, 1906), IV, 374.
2. Ibid.
3. I am indebted to the following persons for their assistance in locating this file of account books: Mrs. Herbert B. Hosmer, Concord Town Treasurer Thomas F. Garrity, Jr., and Town Clerk Mrs. Cornelia Laurence.
4. Thoreau (Boston, 1939), p. 231.

NOTES AND QUERIES. . . .

The Esso Petroleum Company ad in the Sept. 14, 1955 PUNCH (p. xiv) leads off with a quotation from HDT.

We are delighted to welcome into being an Emerson Society, with Prof. Kenneth W. Cameron of Trinity College, Hartford, Conn., as its prime mover. Further details will be found on an enclosure. We hope that our members will lend it their support.

We hear that next spring Simon & Schuster will issue a new book on HDT by Henry Beetle Hough, famed editor of the VINEYARD GAZETTE; that Sherman Paul will soon have an article on "Life without Principle" in the HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN and a new book on HDT, and that the NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY BULLETIN will have an article by your secretary on A WEEK.

We have heard that H.G. Wells once told a lecture audience that when he interviewed Stalin, Stalin was reading a copy of WALDEN. Can anyone authenticate this story?

Several years ago we printed a letter by F.B. Sanborn (in AMERICAN LITERATURE for May, 1953) in which Sanborn stated that Thoreau was a member of the examining committee in natural history at Harvard in the late 1850's. Prof. Kenneth Cameron recently requested Dr. Kimball C. Elkins to search the Harvard Corporation records for some trace of this appointment. But Dr. Elkins could find no trace of Thoreau's name. Apparently Sanborn was wrong again.

Raymond D. Gozzi writes pointing out that the poem on p. 189 of Carl Bode's COLLECTED POEMS OF HENRY THOREAU, which now reads "For though the caves were rabbited," should probably read "For though the eaves were rabbated" to make sense. He also points out that the poem on p. 206 is a fragment of "The Hero" on p. 162.

W.D. Sutton, R.R.#4, London, Ont., has an extra copy of Thoreau's JOURNAL, Vol. V,

which he will gladly give to anyone who lacks it in his set.

Members of the Thoreau Society nominating committee for 1956 are Prof. J. Lyndon Shanley, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.; Mrs. Leslie Anderson, Concord, Mass.; and Mr. Ralph Chapman, 67 Main St., Brattleboro, Vt., chairman. Suggestions for nominations may be directed to any of these members.

Prof. Perry Miller spoke on Thoreau at the annual Chautaugua Institute in Chautaugua, New York, on July 19, 1955.

Prof. F.B.Dedmond spoke on "Thoreau's ethical concept of government" on radio station WQHS (Shelby, N.C.) on Sept. 4, 1955.

There has been congressional objection to distribution of a book entitled PRO-FILL OF AMERICA abroad because it contains an extract from WALDEN in it. The NEW YORK TIMES delivered cogent editorials on the subject on June 19, 1955 and July 8, 1955.

Mrs. Herbert Hosmer has recently pointed out to us that when Thoreau's death was recorded in the CONCORD TOWN REPORT for 1863, it listed his occupation as "natural historian."

Clayton Hoagland's article based on the Edmund Sewall journals, which he describes elsewhere in this issue, will appear in the December, 1955, NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY.

Raymond Adams has recently called our attention to a book he has just discovered: Charles H. Sweetser's TOURIST'S AND INVALID'S GUIDE TO THE NORTHWEST, published in New York in 1867. It contains information about Minnesota, Wisconsin, Dakota, and the Lake Superior Region, and includes a whole section for "the invalid." Mr. Adams adds, "This suggests that the Minnesota region was an advertised resort for tuberculosis victims in the 1860's. If this kind of publicity was out as early as 1860 it may explain why Thoreau chose to go there in search of health.

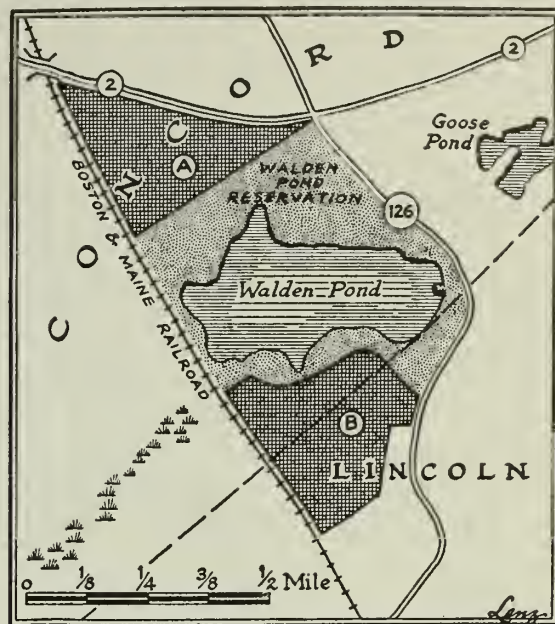
T.L.Bailey calls our attention to a pun to end all puns on Thoreau. Hazel D. Watt, in a letter to the CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER for October 18, 1955, writes, "Thoreau's account of his river trips in THE MAINE WOODS prompts me to call his diet of fish and berries the Maine Thoreau Fare."

Once again I find my files clogged with duplicate clippings pertaining to Thoreau. If any of you are interested in having some of them, send along a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and I'll fill it up.

Bulletin 5, issued twelve years ago, was made up of a series of statements by our members as to why Thoreau appealed to them. We've always thought it one of our more interesting bulletins. Although we realize it smacks of the soap-opera contest, we would welcome similar statements again and will run them in the bulletin as there is space. "Why I like Thoreau" in fifty words or less! Send them in.

AN EXPANSION OF THE WALDEN POND RESERVATION . . . by Mrs. Herbert Hosmer

(The map below, by Russell H. Lenz, is reprinted with permission from the CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR for June 28, 1955.)



Russell H. Lenz, Chief Cartographer

Plans for Walden Pond Site

Details of a proposed 90- to 100-acre expansion of Walden Pond State Reservation in Lincoln and Concord, initially approved by the Massachusetts Senate, is shown by the map. Marked "A" is the area proposed for state purchase. The "B" section is the 50-acre site Raymond Emerson is offering as a gift to the State. Dotted area is present reservation.

Through the efforts of State Representatives James DeNormandie of Lincoln and John M. Eaton Jr. of Concord, the Massachusetts General Court in its last session passed legislation for a 90-100 acre expansion of Walden Pond reservation. Approximately 50 acres extending from Walden St. along Route 2 to the railroad will be purchased or taken by eminent domain, and another tract of 50 acres adjoining the present reservation on the Lincoln side of the pond is being donated to the State by Raymond Emerson.

ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHY

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We are indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: R. Adams, H. Adel, T. Bailey, F. Bloomhardt, K. Cameron, W. Conant, F. Dedmond, C. Hoagland, I. Hoover, G. Hosmer, J. Jones, A. Kern, B. Lambert, N. Lehrman, L. Massey, H. Morrison, R. Robbins, R. Schaedle, W. Sutton, R. Wheeler, W. White, and G. Wright. Please notify the secretary of any new items of Thoreau interest.

The Thoreau Society, Inc., is an informal organization of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Its bulletins are issued quarterly; its booklets, occasionally. Annual meetings are held in Concord each July. Officers of the society are Herbert F. West (Hanover, N. H.), president; Mrs. Herbert Hosmer (Concord, Mass.), vice-president; and Walter Harding, secretary-treasurer. Annual membership in the society is one dollar; life membership, \$25.00. Communications concerning membership or publications should be addressed to WALTER HARDING, 505 CABELL HALL, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA.